

In the Claims:

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B1 1. (amended) A telephone switching system for facilitating and controlling voice and data communication among and between telephone sets, both internal to said system and external to said system, said system comprising:

a telephone exchange switch controllable by a central processing unit (CPU) contained within said telephone exchange switch, said CPU also being used [having means] for forming predetermined messages;

a voice mail system in electronic communication with said telephone exchange switch using a data communications link for message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said data link being in addition to a voice link between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said voice mail system including means for forming predetermined messages, for said message exchange, said message exchange also serving to control said telephone exchange switch; and

at least one telephone set in electronic communication with said telephone exchange switch, said telephone set including means for displaying alphanumeric characters in a human readable form, said means for displaying being operable responsive to at least one message received from said telephone exchange switch resulting from said message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said telephone set further including at least one manual switch for sending a signal to said telephone exchange switch

responsive to said message received from said telephone exchange switch resulting from said message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said signal being indicative of a predetermined response to said message from said voice mail system.

17. (amended) A computer implemented method for operating a telephone switching system for facilitating and controlling voice and data communication among and between telephone sets, both internal to said system and external to said system, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a telephone exchange switch controllable by a central processing unit (CPU) contained within said telephone exchange switch, said CPU also being used [having means] for forming predetermined messages;

providing a voice mail system in electronic communication with said telephone exchange switch using a data communications link for message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system said voice mail system including means for forming predetermined messages said data communications link being in addition to a voice link between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said message exchange serving to control the telephone exchange switch;

providing at least one telephone set in electronic communication with said telephone exchange switch, said telephone set including means for displaying alphanumeric characters in a human readable form, said means for

displaying being operable in response to at least one message received from said telephone exchange switch resulting from said message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said telephone set including at least one manual switch operatively associated with said means for displaying;

forming predetermined messages for said message exchange using said voice mail system and said telephone exchange switch;

exchanging said predetermined messages between said voice mail system and said telephone exchange switch; and

operating said means for displaying responsive to at least one message received from said telephone exchange switch resulting from said message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system.

18. (amended) A computer implemented method for operating a telephone switching system according to claim 17 wherein said method further includes the step of:

sending a signal using said at least one manual switch, said [message] signal being sent to said telephone exchange switch in response to said message received from said telephone exchange switch resulting from said message exchange between said telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system, said signal

being indicative of a predetermined response to said message received from said telephone exchange switch.

31. (amended) A computer implemented method for operating a telephone switching system according to claim 30 wherein said method further includes the step of:

sending a signal using said at least one manual switch, said [message] signal being sent to said second telephone exchange switch in response to said message received from said second telephone exchange switch resulting from said message exchange between said second telephone exchange switch and said voice mail system through said first telephone exchange switch and said internet connection, said signal being indicative of a predetermined response to said message received from said second telephone exchange switch.

REMARKS

The Examiner's Office Action dated July 12, 2002, has been carefully reviewed. The Examiner objected to claims 18 and 31 on informal grounds. Specifically, in line 4 of claim 18, there was insufficient antecedent basis for "said message." Thus, the term "message" has been replaced with "signal." Likewise, in line 5 of claim 31, the term "message" has been replaced with "signal." These claim amendments are deemed to overcome the Examiner's objections.

Next, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-14, 17-19 and 21-29 under 35 U.S.C.